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Reviews

SHORT FRENCH REVIEW GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION BOOK by DAVID HOBART CARNAHAN. D. C. Heath & Co., 1920. pp. X+114+9+vocabulary. \$1.20.

The publication of a new composition book raises the question whether, with our modern reading texts containing reproduction exercises based on the French text and systematically reviewing the whole field of grammar, a formal composition book is still necessary. There are probably few enough of these readers published, or at least few enough schools using them, to warrant the publication of a book like the one being reviewed. A reading text with questions based on the reading material and English sentences to be translated, but with no systematic review of grammar is not a sufficient substitute for a composition book, though the use of reading texts containing various kinds of exercises employing the words and idioms of the text and emphasizing progressively certain points of grammar obviates the necessity of a special composition book. A well graded progressive series of such reading books would be a great contribution to our supply of texts. Until we have them, well planned composition books are still needed.

Another question that suggests itself is whether it is well to spend a whole semester or year on merely reviewing. Should not the spiral method be followed and the field enlarged by the addition of new material while the old is being reviewed? Whether or not Professor Carnahan's book fulfils this requirement depends upon what grammar was used before beginning the composition book. A number of the older grammars contain practically all the material found in this text, but most of the newer grammars are not so complete. Therefore if one of the latter has been used, this Review Grammar contains sufficient new material. This is particularly true in the case of such subjects as the use of the articles and of the subjunctive and the number of irregular verbs and idiomatic expressions.

Though the author states in his preface that "this is not a reference grammar," the logical arrangement of the grammatical material and the quite complete treatment of one or more subjects in each lesson makes it a better reference grammar than most first year books. Nevertheless, there are a number of cases in which the subject might have been treated in a fuller manner. To cite a few examples: In the discussion of the partitive construction no distinction is made between *avec* followed by a concrete, and by an abstract noun. Among the various uses of the subjunctive, that

after *que* when *que* stands for *si* is not mentioned. In fact the use of *que* instead of the repetition of another conjunction is not mentioned in the book. The only example of the use of *faire* in the causative sense to be found in the book is in the expression *faire venir*.

Except for the rather uncommon "Vogue la galère" as an example of the use of the subjunctive and a case or two of rather forced uses of idiomatic expressions, as the use of *s'en aller* in the sentence "The letter I read is gone," the book is singularly free of unusual words and constructions.

In general make up and appearance the book leaves little to be desired. It is of convenient size and is printed in clear type on good smooth paper. A number of good pictures of places in Paris and France appear where these places are being talked about in the composition material. The vocabulary seems to be very complete, only one word being found omitted. Does the blame for the following note rest on the type setter? "Adjectival clauses are clauses that are introduced by a relative pronoun and are equivalent to a relative pronoun."

Each of the sixteen lessons consists of seven parts: 1, Statement of grammar rules; 2, conjugation of two or three irregular verbs; 3, idiomatic expressions; 4, French text in dialog or epistolary form and dealing with a trip to France; 5, questions in French based on the preceding text; 6, composition in dialog form containing words and idiomatic expressions found in the French text, but generally with entirely different continuity of thought; and, 7, an oral drill consisting of short English sentences. The first lesson also contains a supplement on verb formation and orthographic changes in verbs. It is in part 6 that this composition book shows particular merit. With a few exceptions the author has been able to offer in quite idiomatic English examples for the various points of grammar to be reviewed in that lesson and to bring into use the idiomatic expressions to be learned. But not only do the points of that lesson appear, each lesson also reviews many other points previously learned. The author's claim that "Repetition is the keynote of the book" holds true. This section is not merely a rearrangement of the French text as is so often the case in reproduction exercises, but introduces quite new subject matter.

Though the reviewer would prefer to have grammar reviews and composition exercises based on the regular reading text, he does not hesitate to recommend this book to those who wish to keep the composition work separate from the reading.

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